

The Practice of Prayer, Pt. 4

Multiple Scripture References

Point 1: We must pray to release God's will

Matt. 16:19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

2 Chron. 7:14 If my people...pray...then...I will hear and I will heal their land.

Point 2: We must pray according to God's will

Matt. 6:9 Pray then like this: "Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. **10** Your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Point 3: We must pray believing that God will answer

Matt. 21:22 ...whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.

1 John 5:14 Now this is the confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us.

Ten Hindrances to Prayer

1. Unrighteousness

John 9:31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him.

God does not hear the prayers of unsaved people.

Prov. 15:8 The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright is acceptable to him... **29** The LORD is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous.

2. Ignoring the poor

Prov. 21:13 Whoever closes his ear to the cry of the poor will himself call out and not be answered.

Isaiah 58:7 Share your food with the hungry, and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them, and do not hide from relatives who need your help. **9** Then when you call, the LORD will answer. 'Yes, I am here,' he will quickly reply.

3. Unhealthy marital relationship

1 Pet. 3:5 ...holy women of the past...were submissive to their own husbands, **6** like Sarah, who obeyed Abraham and called him her master...**7** Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.

If God called you to the marriage, then He called you to worship together in your own home.

Charles Spurgeon: The house in which there is no family altar can scarcely expect the divine blessing.

4. Sin

Isa. 59:1 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save, or his ear dull, that it cannot hear; **2** but your iniquities have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear.

Psalms 66:16 Come and hear, all you who fear God, and I will tell what he has done for my soul. **17** I cried to him with my mouth, and high praise was on my tongue. **18** If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

5. Disobedience

Deut. 1: 44 Then the Amorites who lived in that hill country came out against you and chased you as bees do and beat you down in Seir as far as Hormah. **45** And you returned and wept before the LORD, but the LORD did not listen to your voice or give ear to you.

Isa. 1:4 Ah, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, offspring of evildoers, children who deal corruptly! They have forsaken the LORD, they have despised the Holy One of Israel, they are utterly estranged. **15** When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood.

Disobedience is not just an act of rebellion against the will of God.

It is a statement that we do not truly believe God.

6. Unbelief

James 1:5 If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. **6** But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for the one who doubts is like a wave of

the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind. **7** For that person must not suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; **8** he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.

Rom. 4:20 He (Abraham) staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strong in faith, giving glory to God; **21** And being fully persuaded that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform.

Our lack of prayer or the ineffectiveness of our prayer may not be because we don't believe God can do something, but that He will do it.

7. Disregard for Scripture

Prov. 28:9 If one turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer is an abomination.

Prov. 1:24 Since you rejected me when I called and no-one gave heed when I stretched out my hand, **25** since you ignored all my advice and would not accept my rebuke, **26** I in turn will laugh at your disaster; I will mock when calamity overtakes you... **28** Then they will call to me but I will not answer; they will look for me but will not find me.

Zech. 7:11 They refused to pay attention and turned a stubborn shoulder and stopped their ears that they might not hear. **12** They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the LORD of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets. Therefore great anger came from the LORD of hosts. **13** "As I called, and they would not hear, so they called, and I would not hear," says the LORD of hosts.

8. Idolatry

Jer. 11:10 They have turned back to the iniquities of their forefathers, who refused to hear my words. They have gone after other gods to serve them. The house of Israel and the house of Judah have broken my covenant that I made with their fathers.

11 Therefore, thus says the LORD, behold, I am bringing disaster upon them that they cannot escape. Though they cry to me, I will not listen to them.

God will not tolerate being second in your life behind anyone or anything. And He will tolerate a concept of Him that is not in line with His revelation of Himself in Scripture.

Any concept of God that you hold in your mind that is rooted in tradition or imagination instead of on the solid teaching of Scripture is a deficient viewpoint and is a form of idolatry.

9. Unforgiveness

Mark 11:25 Whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses.

Matt. 5:23 ...if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24** leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.

Matt. 18:19 ...if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. **20** For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them.

In the negative:

If two of you are in disagreement, no matter what they ask, it won't be done. Where two or three are gathered in my name in disunity, I will be absent from their midst.

10. Selfishness

James 4:1 What causes quarrels and what causes fights among you? Is it not this, that your passions are at war within you? **2** You desire and do not have, so you murder. You covet and cannot obtain, so you fight and quarrel. You do not have, because you do not ask. **3** You ask and do not receive, because you ask wrongly, to spend it on your passions.

Since prayer is a critical part of God's plan, anything which hinders prayer must be wrong – must be sinful.

But that does not mean that we are prevented from praying, because God has made a provision for sin.

First of all through salvation.

God does not hear the prayers of the lost, but He does hear the prayer of repentance.

Secondly through sanctification and the promise of...

1 John 1:9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, so that he will forgive us our sins and will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

This morning, we have discovered from the Bible ten things that could hinder our prayers or that could prevent God from hearing your prayers.

There are enough people here and enough hindrances that somewhere along the line, every person here should have reason to confess to God this morning.